

Purdue to test the limits of text messaging

September 18 2007

Purdue University will conduct what is believed to be the first large-scale, real-world test of using text messaging to issue emergency alerts.

The test, which will begin on Monday, Sept. 24, will involve more than 7,200 volunteers who will accept the test messages and respond so that researchers can track the actual time it takes to deliver messages to a mass audience.

Following recent highly publicized events, universities have been challenged to find ways to quickly communicate with students in crisis situations. But the limits of current technology are not well understood, and high-volume testing of technologies like text messaging has not been previously conducted.

Scott Ksander, Purdue's executive director of information technology networks and security, says there are many variables that can delay the delivery of messages, including cell tower proximity, signal strength and system traffic volume.

"When we need to send an emergency message, time is the most critical factor. We have seen reports of messaging rates as low as 200 to 300 per minute in some environments, while we have some vendors making unbelievable claims of thousands per second," Ksander says. "We need to measure the environment available at Purdue, do a good engineering analysis on the systems, and understand technical and process changes we need to make to ensure that delivery time are at an acceptable level for mass emergency notification."

Ksander says the results of the study will be shared with other universities and emergency planners after the results are calculated.

If the testing is successful, Purdue may add text messaging capabilities to an existing integrated emergency notification system.

Source: Purdue University

Citation: Purdue to test the limits of text messaging (2007, September 18) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-09-purdue-limits-text-messaging.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.